



Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 18, 2007

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ed Allis
AT&T

Greg Ashcraft
South Arkansas
Telephone Company

Dave Burdick
Pine Bluff Jefferson
County Library
System

Arl Cope
Alliance
Communications

Maryce Cunningham
Suddenlink
Communications

Jim Dailey
Flake & Kelley
Commercial

John Dreher
CenturyTel

George Hopkins, Esq.
Attorney at Law

Len Pitcock
Arkansas Cable
Telecommunications
Association

Wendy Wheeler
Alltel
Communications

James Winningham
Arkansas Insurance
Department

Meeting was called to order by James Winningham at 9:30 a.m.
at the office of the Arkansas Capital Corp.

Video Conference Call with Terri Glaze of Sen. Mark Pryor's staff:

- a. The 2007 Farm Bill –
 - 1) Consensus has not yet been reached on the provisions of a new bill
 - 2) The iBranch amendment to the Farm Bill did not pass
 - 3) Changes have been made in the broadband loan program to address concerns, including term length of loans and strengthened eligibility requirements.
- b. Connect the Nation
 - 1) The earliest possible date for "Connect the Nation" matching grant funding is 2009. This funding would assist in identifying and tracking broadband availability.
 - 2) Sen. Pryor's staff will assist Connect Arkansas in applying for these funds.
- c. Broadband Summit – the staff will assist in the organization of a day in Washington, D.C., in April or May when ABAC and Connect Arkansas members would meet with representatives from the Republican and Democratic staffs, the FCC, and the Department of Agriculture

1. Roll call and visitor introductions

In attendance:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Ed Allis | John Dreher |
| Greg Ashcraft | George Hopkins, Esq. |
| Arl Cope | Wendy Wheeler |
| Maryce Cunningham | James Winningham |
| Jim Dailey | |

Absent:

Dave Burdick
Len Pitcock

Also in attendance:

Sam Walls, Connect Arkansas
Piper Knutson, Arkansas Capital Corp.
Dr. Mark Peterson, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
Ricky Williams, Genesis Broadband
Becky Raines, Arkansas Department of Education
Herschel Cleveland, Arkansas Department of Information Services

2. Review of minutes from previous meeting

Minutes were approved
Jim Dailey moved
Ed Allis seconded

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3. Connect Arkansas Update
 - a. Several Connect Arkansas representatives are visiting North Carolina to review activities in that state's broadband mapping project.
 - b. Staff candidates for the mapping process are being identified.
 - c. Application for funding to be obtained through the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority has begun.
 - d. The project is proceeding
4. Status of web action item
 - a. The web site is up – www.BroadbandAdvisoryCouncil.Arkansas.gov
 - b. Arkansas Capital Corp. has been assisting
5. Video Conference with Sen. Pryor's Washington office
(See above)
6. Update from Emerging Issues Forum recently held in Florida

Wendy summarized the presentations during this event and distributed several hand-outs from the session and a list of web sites that contain valuable information and links.

 - a. Reported that multiple states have begun work on projects similar to ours
 - b. Suggested that, if full funding is not available soon, the project begins in a test area where local stakeholders might help fund so that the group can show progress and demonstrate effectiveness.
7. Any Comments by the Public

Becky Raines – Part of her role as a member of the Arkansas Department of Information Systems (DIS) is to assist school, libraries, and rural health care centers in creating applications for e-rate funding. Can also be a source of information for ABAC and its members.
8. Discuss draft of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council

James distributed next draft of ABAC's first report and asked members to email any corrections and / or changes to him by noon the following day. Would like to re-write, receive unanimous approval, and distribute before the end of the week.
9. Contact with initiatives in other states and countries
 - a. James prefaced the discussion by reiterating that the Council has been commissioned to monitor broadband activities in other states and nations worldwide.
 - b. Maryce distributed information about the Missouri Rural High-Speed Internet Access Task Force, reviewed the various aspects of their web site, and advised that the group had held several public hearings to receive input from the public.
 - c. James told the Council that he had been in touch with representatives of Connected Nation and believed they who would be available to speak to our group.
10. Discussion of public representation of the Council
 - a. It is important that we use every means possible to get the message out about the Council and its activities. Maryce distributed the press release that was sent to every newspaper, news bureau, and commercial television station in the state. So far, no media have picked up that story or called for information or an interview. An updated version will be prepared and distributed after the first of the year to all Arkansas media, magazines, legislators, mayors, schools, etc.
 - b. James has been invited to address the Winter Conference of the Arkansas Municipal League in January.

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10. Discussion of public representation of the Council (continued)

- c. Maryce invited James to appear as a guest on Suddenlink Community Connections Television, which is distributed to all subscribers to Suddenlink Communications around the state.
- d. John suggested that we all engage our corporate public relations staffs to assist in creating publicity vehicles.
- e. Greg suggested that ABAC hold a Broadband Immersion Day in January or February during which we would schedule speakers from many different fields and invite public comment. It is felt that these presentations will help the group to be more focused and to gather a great deal of information for our next report, which will undoubtedly be due at the end of the first quarter.
- f. It was suggested that Commissioner Bassett might be interested in addressing the Council.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Greg Ashcraft moved.

Wendy Wheeler seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryce J. Cunningham
Secretary